

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-20 were filed in the present application. These claims have been subjected to a restriction requirement. In response, Claims 10-12 and 18-20 are canceled, above, as drawn to non-elected inventions. Claims 1-9 and 13-17 have been rejected under various rejections. As outlined above, newly presented Claims 21-24 have been added. Therefore, Claims 1-9 and 13-17 and 21-24 are pending in this application.

The newly presented Claim 21 is supported in originally filed Claim 1 and at page 19, lines 12-17 of the Specification and in Fig. 4. Newly presented Claims 22-24 are supported in original Claim 9 and at page 19, lines 19-24 of the Specification.

Rejections

Claims 1-9 and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Yamamoto et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,607,416 (hereinafter "Yamamoto"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The present invention and Yamamoto have been described in detail in Applicant's previous response.

The Office Action argues that Yamamoto discloses a waist belt having a first belt end secured to the suspension sling proximal end and a second belt end and that the suspension sling is suspendable in a wearer's crotch region. Applicant respectfully submits that this reading of Yamamoto fails to read on Independent Claims 1, 13, and 21. In particular, Yamamoto purports to disclose an integral garment, and the suspension sling is manufactured with both ends secured to the waist belt. In marked contrast, the invention of Claims 1, 13, and 21 relate to absorbent garments that have one end (Claims 1 & 21) or no ends (Claim 13) secured to the waist belt. Only when the garment is placed about the user's torso are both ends of the sling attached to the waist belt. This becomes even more clear when one considers the "wherein" clause of Claim 21 and Claims 9, 15-17, and 22. These claims each have specific limitations that are clearly used when the garment is

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fastened during use. Because specific features of the presently claimed invention are lacking in the Yamamoto reference reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are earnestly solicited.

Applicant believes that the foregoing presents a full and complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Applicant looks forward to an early notice of allowance for this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rothfus', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

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October 29, 2004